2.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Chapter 2 of the DEIS provides a complete description of the alternatives considered. The DEIS is included as Appendix D of this FEIS. The following summarizes that discussion and also provides a description of the Preferred Alternative.

2.1 Alternatives Considered in the DEIS

2.1.1 Alternatives Considered But Not Advanced

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement considered a broad range of initial alternatives, based on public and agency scoping, analysis of physical and resource constraints, future travel demand, and technical analyses. Eight initial concepts were identified and considered, including:

- Alternative Corridor Through the Wood River Valley
- SH-75 with Reversible Lanes
- Fixed Guideway Transit (Light Rail Transit - LRT)
- Bus Only Transit
- Four-Lane SH-75 with Center Turn Lane
- Four Lane with High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane
- Enhanced Two Lane
- State Policy Level of Service C

An alternative corridor through the Wood River Valley, reversible lanes, Fixed Guideway Transit (LRT), and bus only transit concepts were not advanced into screening of alternatives for the following reasons:

- Alternative corridor: No other continuous unused corridor exists, necessitating the acquisition of a new corridor and major impacts on resources not currently affected by transportation facilities.
- Reversible lanes: There is a high potential for driver confusion and accidents resulting from traffic entering from driveways and cross streets. To maintain access from the over 100 access points between Hailey and Ketchum, an additional lane will be required to accommodate turning movements. Winter conditions will make lane markings difficult to see and increase the accident risk.
- Fixed Guideway Transit (LRT): LRT will result in adverse impacts to properties from noise and vibration, delays to local traffic circulation from the 34 at-grade street crossing of LRT tracks, low potential ridership, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital and local operations funding requirements for projects that Blaine County will not be able to finance.
- Bus Only Transit: This initial alternative will not remove sufficient vehicle trips from SH-75 to eliminate the need for additional highway capacity on SH-75. It will also have high capital costs and high annual operating costs.

The four remaining concepts were advanced into screening for additional analysis. These included the following:

- Alternative 2 Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane
- Alternative 3 Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane and HOV
- Alternative 4 Enhanced Two-Lane Plus Transit, and
- Alternative 5 State Policy Level of Service C

Alternative 1 No Build was also defined. Alternative 1 Future No-Build is the year 2025 transportation condition against which other alternatives are evaluated. It includes all programmed transportation improvements in a project area except the proposed action. Alternative 1 consists of the SH-75 roadway configuration in place as of the fall of 2003, the existing Peak Bus operation, and existing Wood River Rideshare programs.

The typical cross-sections for Alternatives 1 through 5 are shown on Figure 2-1. These cross-sections were used as a template to define a conceptual footprint for Alternatives 2 through 5, using aerial mapping. This cross-sectional template was centered on the existing centerline of SH-75 and new cut-and fill lines were determined. Widening was assumed to be equal on each side of this centerline. The edge of the conceptual cut and fill lines were then used to identify additional right-of-way requirements and initial impacts on natural and community resources.

Alternative 4 Enhanced Two-Lane Plus Transit was developed in response to community input. It was defined as a two-lane roadway that used aggressive access control, minor improvements to the existing roadway, trip reduction strategies, and additional transit service to meet future travel needs. Minor improvements included left and right turn lanes at key intersections, traffic signal coordination, left-turn acceleration lanes, and access management. It also increased the amount of peak hour transit, flextime, telecommuting, and carpooling.

To achieve the higher capacity on a two-lane roadway in Alternative 4, access must be limited to one approach every half-mile per side of SH-75. Two methods of achieving this level of control were developed for Alternative 4: purchase of access from property owners, and development of frontage roads that will connect to SH-75 at approximately half-mile intervals. A typical 120-foot cross-section incorporating frontage roads was defined and is shown on Figure 2-1.

Alternative 5 State Policy Level of Service C was considered. ITD applies a policy of achieving a peak travel period LOS C on transportation improvement projects. This policy allows for statewide consistency in state highway project planning and design and generally results in projects that accommodate future travel needs with efficient use of available funds. The typical cross-section needed to achieve LOS C in 2025 for the SH-75 segment with the highest level of congestion and greatest number of access points would have a total of seven lanes, as shown on Figure 2-1 (six travel lanes and one center turn lane).

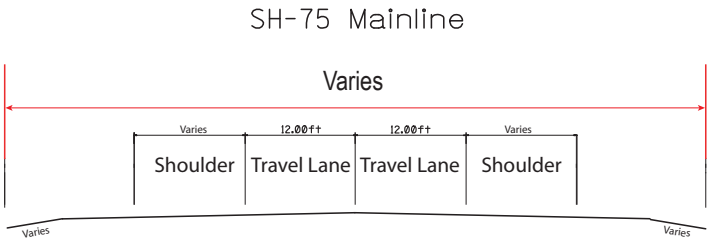
These five alternatives were evaluated based on several criteria: travel performance, resource impacts, conceptual costs, and community impacts. The output from the travel demand forecasting model developed for the project provided data for the following travel performance indicators: number of intersections at LOS D, LOS E and F; number of lane miles at LOS D, E and F; travel time; vehicle hours traveled; vehicle miles traveled; hours of delay; and intersections with side street delay. Based on the cross-section templates for each alternative, initial environmental resource impact criteria were estimated for wetlands, historic properties, and additional right-of-way required. Conceptual construction and right-of-way costs and operating and maintenance costs were estimated. Using the templates and the aerial mapping, community impacts were estimated for vegetation, residential buffer, berms, homes, and walls.

This information was used in a screening analysis that was reviewed by stakeholders, ITD and the Federal Highway Administration. It resulted in the elimination of Alternatives 4 and 5 from further consideration in the environmental analysis.

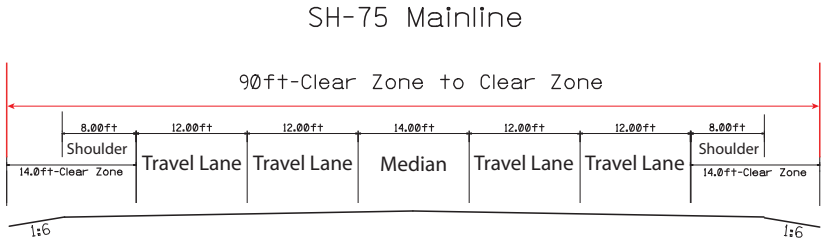
Initial Typical Cross-Sections

Note:
All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.

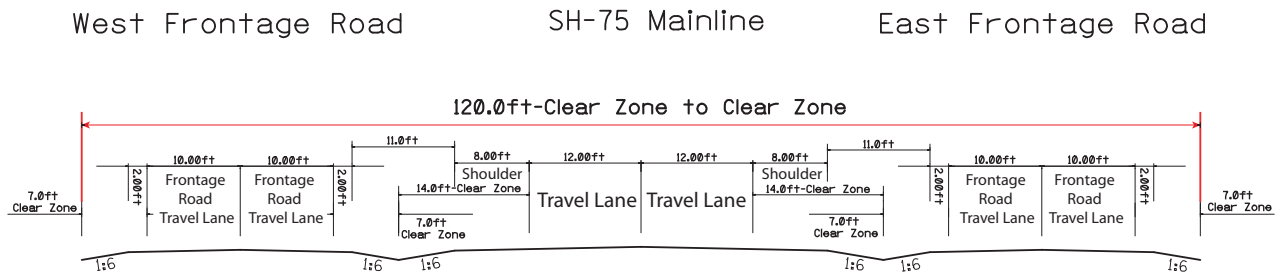
Existing Typical Cross Section:



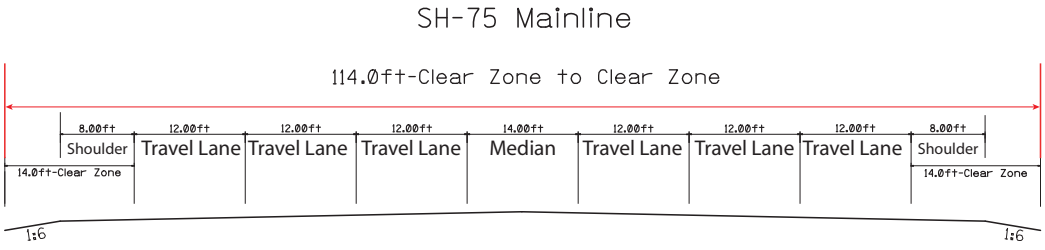
Alternatives 2 & 3 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:



Alternative 4 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:



Alternative 5 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:



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	Project No. STP-F-2392(035) Key No. 3077	
	Title **SH-75** **Initial Concept** **Typical Cross-Sections**	Figure **2-1** Date: *February 2008*

Alternative 4 was eliminated from further consideration as it would provide minimal travel performance improvement, had a right-of-way acquisition requirement nearly equal to other alternatives that would have better travel performance, and would have higher community impacts than Alternative 2 and 3. Relative to the typical 90-foot cross-section for Alternatives 2 and 3, the 120-foot cross-section to accommodate frontage roads would result in the higher costs and impacts.

Alternative 5 would provide a Level of Service C between Ohio Gulch and Hospital Drive, consistent with ITD's policy of achieving a peak travel period Level of Service C on transportation improvement projects. Although Alternative 5 would achieve this policy, it was eliminated from further consideration because its seven-lane, 114-foot wide cross-section between Ohio Gulch and Hospital Drive would result in the largest purchase of new right-of-way, greatest wetlands impact, greatest community impact, and largest impacts to historic resources. Based on the criteria and data used to conduct the alternatives screening analysis conducted during alternatives development of the DEIS, as summarized in Table 2.1 on page 2-9 of the DEIS, Alternative 5 would impact an additional eight historic structures, require the acquisition of 53 additional acres of new right-of-way, and result in the loss of approximately one mile of existing berms that provide buffering for existing development. ITD and FHWA therefore concluded that a five-lane cross-section that would result in a Level of Service D and have fewer adverse impacts will be acceptable. Alternative 5 was therefore not advanced for further consideration I the DEIS.

2.1.2 Advanced Alternatives

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 were carried forward for detailed evaluation in the DEIS. Based on the initial templates developed for the screening process, additional conceptual engineering and impact analysis were conducted for both Alternatives 2 and 3 to minimize impacts to wetlands and historic properties, minimize right-of-way acquisition, accommodate pedestrians and transit, and address public comment received during the development of the DEIS.

2.1.2.1 Alternative 2 Four Lane with Center Turn Lane

Alternative 2 will reconstruct SH-75 from US-20 Timmerman Junction to River Road in the City of Ketchum. Figures II-1 through II-99 in Volume II of the DEIS appended by reference to this document provide the conceptual designs for this alternative. Table 2-1 summarizes the proposed improvements by geographic segment.

Table 2-1: Summary of Alternative 2 Improvements

Segment	Improvements
US-20 to Gannett Road	Two 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders and 14-foot center turn lane. Passing lanes.
Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road	Widen to match existing 2 lanes in each direction and center turn lane through Bellevue. Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 4-foot safety median, 8-foot shoulders from north Bellevue to Fox Acres. Traffic signals at Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard.
Fox Acres Road to McKercher Boulevard	At-grade improved pedestrian crossings. Traffic signal at Myrtle Street. Bus pull-outs at McKercher Boulevard and SH-75. No other change to existing SH-75 cross-section.
McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road	Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 14-foot center turn lane, 8-foot shoulders. Four-foot safety median when center turn lane not needed. Three pedestrian undercrossings. Traffic signals at Buttercup Road/Zinc Spur Road, Ohio Gulch/Starweather Road. Bus pullouts.

Table 2-1: Summary of Alternative 2 Improvements - continued

Segment	Improvements
Elkhorn Road to Serenade Lane (all within existing SH-75 right-of-way)	- Two 11-foot lanes in each direction; or - Two 11-foot lanes in each direction and a 12-foot center turn lane; or - One 12-foot lane in each direction with a 14-foot center turn lane
Serenade Lane to River Street	- One 14-foot lane in each direction with curb and gutter and sidewalk; or - One 11-foot lane in each direction, 12-foot center turn lane, with curb and gutter and sidewalk; or - One 11-foot lane in each direction, 12-foot center turn lane, 7-foot shoulder or parking strip, curb and gutter and sidewalk; or - Four 11-foot lanes, no shoulders or turn lane, sidewalk one side.
River Street to Saddle Road	No Build. No change to existing SH-75 cross-section.

2.1.2.2 Alternative 3 Four Lane with Center Turn Lane and HOV

Alternative 3 will have the same physical footprint throughout the corridor as Alternative 2, including right- and left-turn lanes, acceleration lanes, bus pullouts, pedestrian under crossings, and traffic signals. Table 2.2 above summarizes those improvements. From McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, the curb lane will operate as a high-occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) in the morning and evening peak hours, peak direction only. It will be restricted to buses and other vehicles carrying 2 or more persons.

2.2 Changes to Alternatives 2 and 3

In response to comments received on the DEIS, roundabouts at two locations and the Ohio/Gulch pedestrian underpass were re-evaluated as part of preparation of this FEIS. As Alternatives 2 and 3 have the same physical footprint, the changes to the conceptual design discussed below apply to both alternatives.

2.2.1 Roundabout Evaluations

The use of roundabouts as an alternative intersection design was raised during the DEIS. Several comments on the DEIS requested consideration of roundabouts for SH-75.

2.2.1.1 Consideration of Roundabouts in the DEIS

During the preparation of the DEIS, the feasibility of roundabouts at Serenade Lane, Ohio Gulch, Buttercup Road, Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard were examined. In all these locations, the roundabout will require right-of-way from property or features that will be subject to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. These include lands from the Reinheimer Ranch, deemed to be historic under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Wood River Trail system, a parks and recreation facility.

As such, these eligible properties are subject to Section 4(f), as codified at 23 United States Code 138. The code states:

> "The Secretary shall not approve any program or project (other than any project for a park road or parkway under section 204 of this title) which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a

> public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, or any land from an historic site of national, State, or local significance as so determined by such officials unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from such use."

Because roundabouts at these locations will require the use of part of a historic property and a parks and recreation resource and the impacts are not expected to be de minimus, Section 4(f) prohibits that use unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the roundabout. Alternatives 2 and 3 and Preferred Alternative all include conceptual designs for non-roundabout intersections at Serenade Lane, Ohio Gulch, Buttercup Road, Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard that meet the purpose and need for the project and that are feasible and prudent alternatives that do not impact these historic or parks and recreation resources. Accordingly, the FHWA cannot approve a roundabout at these locations.

2.2.1.2 Roundabout Experience

In response to the interest in roundabouts and current developments in the transportation industry, telephone research was conducted on the use of and experience with roundabouts in mountain environments that experience snowy winters.

Region 3 of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) was contacted to determine their experience with the use of roundabouts in such locations as Aspen, Glenwood Springs, and Vail. Telephone discussions with the CDOT Chief Design Engineer and Traffic Engineer for Region 3 were conducted on April 10 and 12, 2006.

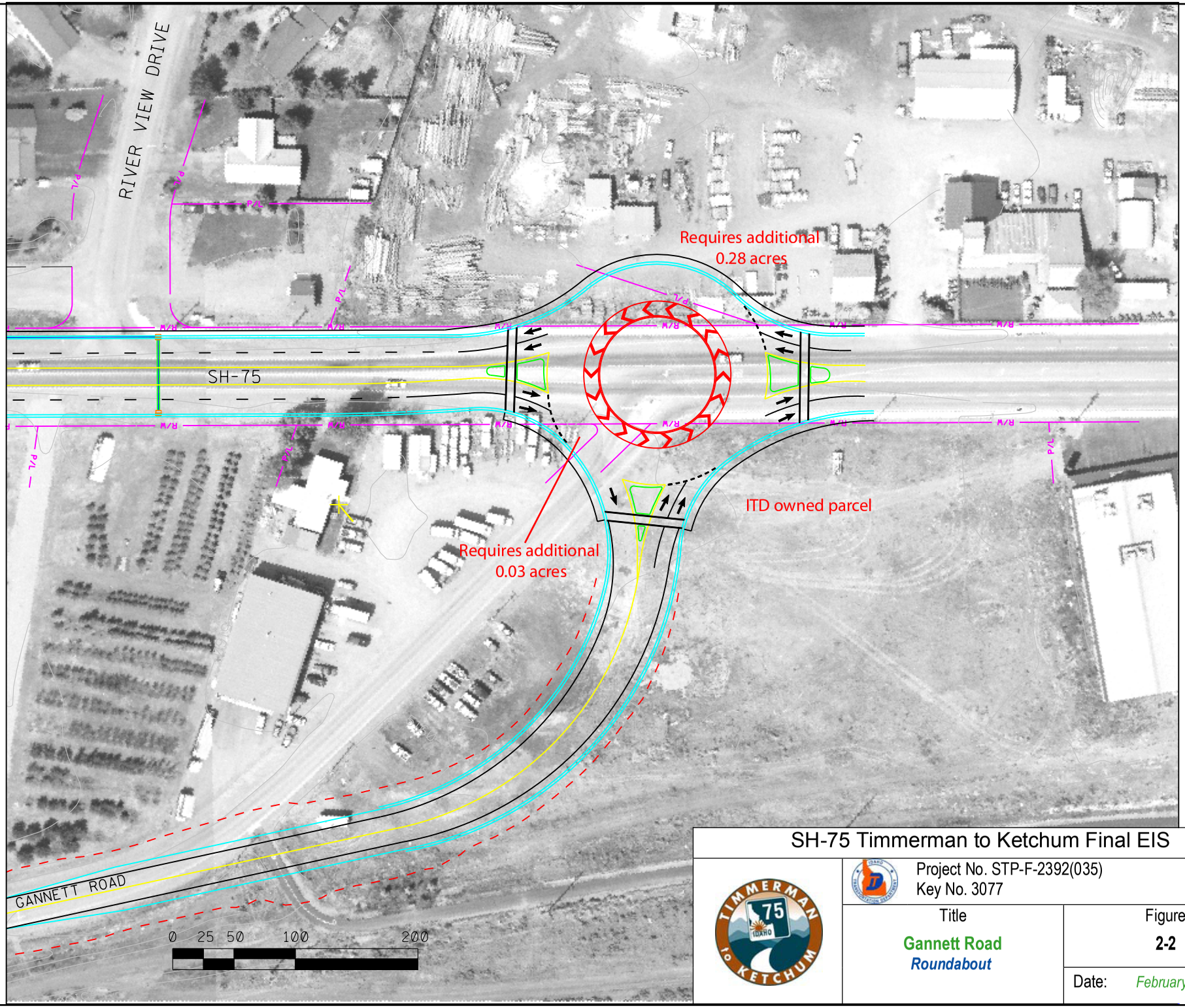
CDOT has positive experience with roundabouts in terms of their ability to handle traffic, safety, and driver acceptance. Most of the CDOT roundabouts have been installed as part of total roadway construction or reconstruction. Snow removal can be an issue from the perspective of shared responsibility between CDOT and the local jurisdiction. Maintenance agreements with the local jurisdictions are commonly put in place to address snow removal and other maintenance issues associated with the roundabouts.

2.2.1.3 Feasible Roundabouts

There are two locations on SH-75 where roundabouts will not require the use of lands that will be subject to Section 4(f) protections. In response to DEIS comments, roundabouts were analyzed at the intersection of SH-75 and Gannett Road and at SH-75 and Elkhorn Road. Roundabouts at both locations were found to be acceptable from a traffic operations perspective and the additional right-of-way required does not contain any natural or manmade resources that are subject to additional analysis under other federal regulations. The conceptual design and traffic operations for roundabouts at Gannett Road and for Elkhorn Road were presented to the City of Bellevue and to the City of Ketchum, respectively in May 2006.

Gannett Road

Figure 2-2 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Gannett Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck).



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Title	Figure
Gannett Road *Roundabout*	2-2
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A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM[8] traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service A/B.

This concept was presented to the City of Bellevue on May 15, 2006 and received a favorable response. It will be one component of a traffic calming plan for the City of Bellevue. Access to the business west of the roundabout will be provided via an additional direct access into the roundabout. Discussions with the land owner on May 22, 2006 were held to obtain input on the roundabout concept and possible access to his property. A favorable verbal response was received.

Relative to the Gannett Road/SH-75 realignment evaluated in the DEIS, the Gannett Road roundabout will require the acquisition of an additional 0.28 acres of land from the owner on the west side of SH-75 and a 0.03 acre sliver of vacant land from a privately owned parcel in the southeast quadrant of the existing intersection. The land required on the west side of SH-75 is currently used for outdoor lumber storage and informal parking by the land owner. The additional 0.31 acres of proposed right-of-way was included in the wetlands, cultural resource, Threatened and Endangered species, and hazardous material surveys documented in Chapter 3 Affected Environment of the DEIS. These surveys were conducted for 150 feet each side of the existing SH-75 centerline. No natural or cultural resources or hazardous materials were found on this property.

As the Gannett Road roundabout will result in an acceptable Level of Service, is favored by the City of Bellevue and acceptable to the affected landowner west of SH-75, and does not have impacts on natural or cultural resources, it is incorporated into Alternatives 2 and 3. Figure II-36 of Volume II of the DEIS is therefore replaced with a revised Figure II-36 that is included in this FEIS in Appendix D.

Elkhorn Road

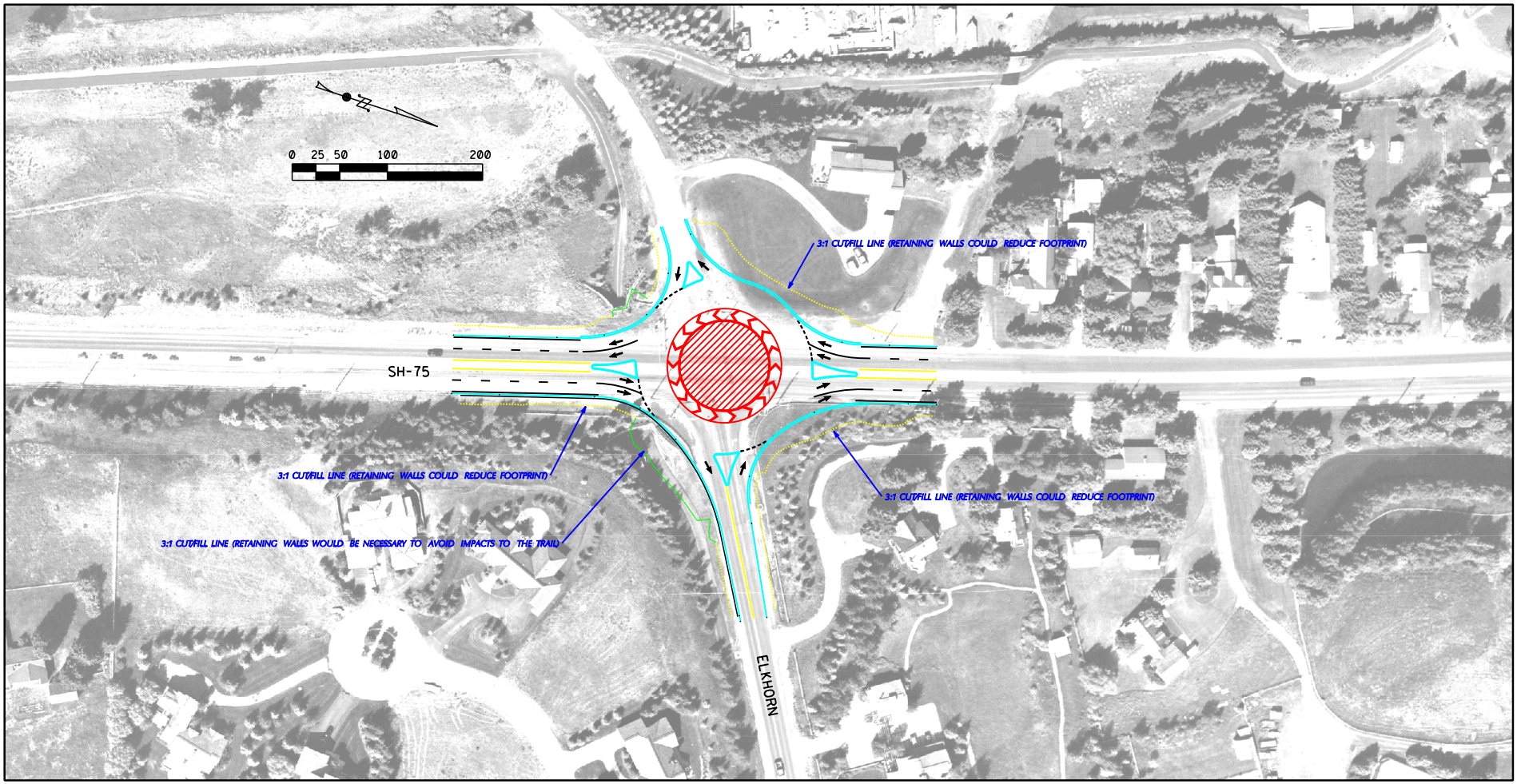
Figure 2-3 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Elkhorn Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck).

A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service C or better.

This concept was presented to the City of Ketchum and City of Sun Valley on May 22, 2006. Through discussion at that meeting, it was determined that the roundabout could be an opportunity to create a gateway entry to both cities and will also serve as a traffic calming device.

The roundabout will require acquisition of private property from all four quadrants of the intersection, totaling approximately 0.32 acres. The City of Ketchum and City of Sun Valley agreed to contact the land owners from which this right-of-way will need to be acquired and obtain input from them. These landowners did not support the roundabout at this time.

[8] VISSIM is a behavior-based multi-purpose traffic simulation computer program that is used internationally to analyze complex traffic conditions on highways and urban roadway situations. It also enables simulation and visualization of traffic operations.



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Key No. 3077

Title
Elkhorn Road
Roundabout

Figure
2-3

Date: *February 2008*

Although the Elkhorn roundabout is feasible from a traffic operations point of view, it is not acceptable to adjacent landowners. The existing at-grade intersection currently operates at Level of Service A and will operate at Level of Service C in 2025 with Alternative 2. As the existing intersection will meet ITD's peak hour LOS C policy in Year 2025, the acquisition of additional right-of-way is difficult to justify. The Elkhorn roundabout is therefore not included in the Preferred Alternative.

2.2.2 Pedestrian Underpass Locations

The DEIS proposed pedestrian underpasses at three locations between McKercher Boulevard and East Fork Road to address pedestrian/bicyclist crossing safety issues identified through the public involvement program. As the Wood River Trail system parallels SH-75 on the east side of the highway in this segment of the corridor, residents west of the highway have difficulty crossing the highway to access the trail.

Comments on the DEIS from the general public and from the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD) questioned the location of the Ohio Gulch/Starweather pedestrian underpass and recommended that a pedestrian underpass be provided at Deer Creek. Deer Creek Road provides direct access to Deer Creek Canyon and the recreational amenities it provides.

A May 22, 2006 coordination meeting with the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD), which administers the Wood River Trail system, BCRD indicated their preference for elimination of the Ohio Gulch/Starweather location in favor of a pedestrian underpass at Deer Creek Road.

Prior to issuance of the DEIS, ITD received a letter from the Starweather Homeowners' Association, opposing the pedestrian underpass at Ohio Gulch as it will occupy the Association's communal lands and will provide access to a private road and development for non-residents of the Starweather subdivision.

The suggested alternative pedestrian underpass at Deer Creek was evaluated. During the preparation of the DEIS, the property in the northwest corner of the SH-75 and Deer Creek intersection has been developed with a home that is designated as an affordable housing unit. Inclusion of a pedestrian underpass at this location will require the removal of this home. As lack of affordable housing is a serious issue in this resort community, this location for a pedestrian underpass was not advanced for further consideration.

An alternate location was therefore examined at Spruce Way. Based on comments received during alternatives development of the DEIS, Alternatives 2 and 3 included a closure of Spruce Way at SH-75 and a cul-de-sac at Spruce Way. This closure and cul-de-sac required the acquisition of additional lands to accommodate the cul-de-sac versus leaving Spruce Way open. This additional ROW was included in the DEIS and impacts to any resources were included in the DEIS evaluation of impacts. The right-of-way required for the cul-de-sac and the widening of SH-75 west of its existing location provides the opportunity to incorporate a pedestrian underpass at Spruce Way. Figure 2-4 shows the conceptual layout of the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass and cul-de-sac.

On the east side, the conceptual design for the pedestrian underpass shown in Figure 2-4 will require 1.08 acres of right-of-way from the Peregrine Ranch area, a large undeveloped privately owned land parcel. This is in addition to the acreage required for the road widening. Discussions with the Blaine County planners indicate that future development of this parcel is expected and, through negotiations with the Peregrine Ranch landowner and future land use development approvals, incorporation of the east portal of the pedestrian underpass and will be negotiated. Exploratory discussions between the land owner and ITD in the fall of 2006, initiated by the land owner, confirm the owner's intent to work with ITD on incorporation of a pedestrian underpass into his future development.

The right-of-way needed from Peregrine Ranch for the east side of the pedestrian underpass is currently used for a landscaped berm adjacent to SH-75 and vacant grassland. As this land falls with 150 feet of the centerline of the existing SH-75 right-of-way, this land was surveyed for natural and cultural resources and

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Key No. 3077

Title
Spruce Way
Pedestrian Underpass

Figure
2-4

Date: *February 2008*

for the existence of hazardous materials as part of the resource surveys conducted and documented in Chapter 3 of the DEIS. Placement of the pedestrian underpass at this location will therefore not result in any impacts on these resources.

The Spruce Way pedestrian underpass is incorporated into both Alternatives 2 and 3 as it meets the existing and future pedestrian/bicyclist needs by connecting the Wood River Trail to residences west of SH-75. It also will provide additional pedestrian and bicyclist access to Deer Creek Road and Deer Creek Canyon.

The Ohio Gulch/Starweather pedestrian underpass is eliminated from Alternatives 2 and 3 for two reasons. The Starweather Homeowners' Association opposes the use of their communal lands for the underpass. Based on comments from Blaine County Recreation District and a review of the parks and recreation discussion in the DEIS, an underpass at this location does not connect to any other regional public recreation resource. Figures II-64 (Spruce Way) and Figures II-70 and II-71 in Volume II of the DEIS are therefore replaced and included in this FEIS in Appendix D.

2.3 Preferred Alternative

2.3.1 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

No preferred alternative was identified in the DEIS. A preferred alternative is identified in this FEIS. The process for identifying the preferred alternative took the following steps:

- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of comments received on the DEIS, including preferences for Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
- ITD additional coordination with regulatory agencies and local jurisdictions in the project area during May and June, 2006. Table 6-1 in Section 6.0 Comments and Coordination of this FEIS lists these meetings.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the comparative transportation performance of the alternatives and their ability to meet the purpose and need for the project.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the impacts of the alternatives on the natural and manmade environment.
- FHWA and ITD review of consistency with local comprehensive plans and expressed desires of local jurisdictions as stated in comments received on the DEIS.

The matrix shown in Table 2-2 summarizes this information for the three DEIS alternatives.

FHWA and ITD conducted a workshop on June 15, 2006 to consider the information presented in Table 2-2 (shown on page 2-7 of this FEIS), comments on the DEIS, technical information contained in the DEIS, and the results of the additional agency and community coordination. A second meeting with FHWA, ITD, and ITD consultant team was held on December 14, 2006 to further discuss the SH-75 alternatives. Subsequently, FHWA identified Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2 was identified as the Preferred Alternative for the following reasons:

- Best increases SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate future year 2025 vehicle traffic;
- Increases transportation safety for all users, relative to the No Build.
- It meets the purpose and need of the project.
- It provides the most travel time advantage for all SH-75 users.
- It provides the highest Level of Service between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road.
- Is generally consistent with local comprehensive plans, goals and objectives..

Table 2.2: Comparison of Build Alternatives

YEAR 2025 TRAVEL PERFORMANCE (McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road Only)		
Evaluation Considerations	***Alternative 2***	***Alternative 3***
Segment Travel Time	16 minutes	25 minutes average; 27 minutes General Purpose, 16 minutes HOV
NOTE: An explanation of why travel time for Alternative 2 and for the HOV lane in Alternative 3 is the same is provided on page 4-8.		
Level of Service - Segment from McKercher to Ohio Gulch - Segment from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn o At East Fork o At Hospital/Broadway Run o At Elkhorn	All Vehicles D D C A C	General Purpose LOS - HOV LOS D – A F – A F – A E – A F – A
NOTE: Intersection LOS for Alternative 2 reflects the most congested approach of the intersection which is typically not the SH-75 approach. Because of the high level of congestion in the general purpose lane with Alternative 3, the most congested approach of the intersection is typically the SH-75 approach.		
Safety	Improved over Alternative 1 No-Build; responds to High Accident Locations	Similar to Alternative 1 No-build except during peak period HOV operation as follows: • Moderate risk for increased rear-end accidents along section between Alturas and Timber Way where existing GP lane will be converted to HOV • Moderate risk of increased rear-end and sideswipe accidents due to right-turning vehicles traveling into and out of HOV lane • Low-to-moderate risk of sideswipe accidents near where HOV designation begins and ends
% Trips in Carpools/Transit	33%	34%
Corridor Delay (vehicle-hours in 2025 peak period)	150	266
Freight Mobility	Mobility for goods movement improved based on overall improvement in Level of Service, safety.	During peak hour HOV operations, trucks restricted to HOV lane with low Level of Service. Higher potential for rear-end collisions with trucks due to stop and go conditions and slower truck accelerations speeds.
Minimum Operating Segment for HOV	Not applicable	Elkhorn to Ohio Gulch to attain at least 5 minutes per vehicle minimum travel time saving in HOV lane
- Vehicles in HOV lane [1]	N/A	260-280
- Persons in HOV lane	N/A	1100-1200
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (US-20 to River Street)		
Prime Farmland	59 acres directly impacted. Form ADF 1006 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment score of 132 (<160 score threshold set by NRCS).	Same as Alternative 2. 59 acres directly impacted.
Noise Impacts	8 locations where predicted noise levels will be at or exceeding 66 dBA. Two locations where noise barrier mitigation is feasible.	Same as Alternative 2. 8 locations where predicted noise levels will be at or exceeding 66 dBA. Two locations where noise barrier mitigation is feasible.
Air Quality (Clean Air Act)	No exceedances of the 1-hour or the 8-hour NAAQS for CO. No adverse impacts.	Same as Alternative 2. No exceedances of the 1-hour or the 8-hour NAAQS for CO or adverse impacts.
Environmental Justice Populations	No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations.	Same as Alternative 2. No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations.
Wetlands Impacts (Section 404)	Impacts to 1.19 acres of natural wetlands, 1.29 acres of irrigation dependent wetlands, 1.07 acres of natural wetlands at mitigation site. Full mitigation at Boulder Flats Mitigation Site.	Same as Alternative 2. Impacts to 1.19 acres of natural wetlands, 1.29 acres of irrigation dependent wetlands, 1.07 acres of natural wetlands at mitigation site. Full mitigation at Boulder Flats Mitigation Site.
Historic Resources (Section 106 and Section 4(f))	Section 4(f) de minimus impacts on 7 cultural resources (5 canals, two historic properties)	Same as Alternative 2. Section 4(f) de minimus impacts on 7 cultural resources (5 canals, two historic properties)
Threatened and Endangered Species (Section 7)	Biological Assessment (BA) gave "May effect, not likely to adversely effect" determinations for Canada Lynx, Bald Eagle, Utah Valvata Snail. "No effect" determination for Gray Wolf, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bull trout, Steelhead, Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon. Since the BA was signed, the Bald Eagle has been delisted and but is still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.	Same as Alternative 2. Biological Assessment (BA) gave "May effect, not likely to adversely effect" determinations for Canada Lynx, Bald Eagle, Utah Valvata Snail. "No effect" determination for Gray Wolf, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bull trout, Steelhead, Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon. Since the BA was signed, the Bald Eagle has been delisted and but is still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
COMMUNITY AND AGENCY COMMENT		
Local Jurisdictions Support	No written support from local jurisdictions.	Unanimous written support from 6 local jurisdictions, including separate letters from the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, as well as a joint letter signed by the cities, Blaine County and the City of Carey.
Preferences Expressed in DEIS Comments	Of 59 comments expressing a preference, about 52% of public comment supported.	Of 59 comments expressing a preference, about 48% of public comment supported.
Regulatory and Resource Agencies	No preferences expressed for alternatives.	No preferences expressed for alternatives.

[1] The travel demand forecasting model was run with 3 different all-day parking costs in the City of Ketchum. The results show that paid parking will increase the number of vehicles and person trips in the HOV lane.

2.3.2 Description of Preferred Alternative

Except for the three changes associated with the Gannett Road roundabout and the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass discussed below, the Preferred Alternative contains the same physical roadway section along with vertical and horizontal geometry described in the DEIS for Alternatives 2 and 3. Figures 2-2 through 2-9 on pages 2-10 through 2-17 provide an overview of these physical characteristics by geographic segment and illustrate the typical cross-sections for each geographic segment.

As Alternative 2 is constructed from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, it will be signed to indicate that future conversion of the curb lane to a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane may occur in the future.

The Preferred Alternative 2 is described in the following sections. Based on comments received on the DEIS, two changes to the conceptual design of the project have been incorporated into the Alternative: a roundabout at the intersection of SH-75 and Gannett Road in the City of Bellevue, incorporation of a pedestrian underpass at Spruce Way and SH-75 north of the City of Hailey, and elimination of the proposed pedestrian underpass at SH-75 and Ohio Gulch/Starweather Road. These are detailed as follows.

Gannett Road Roundabout

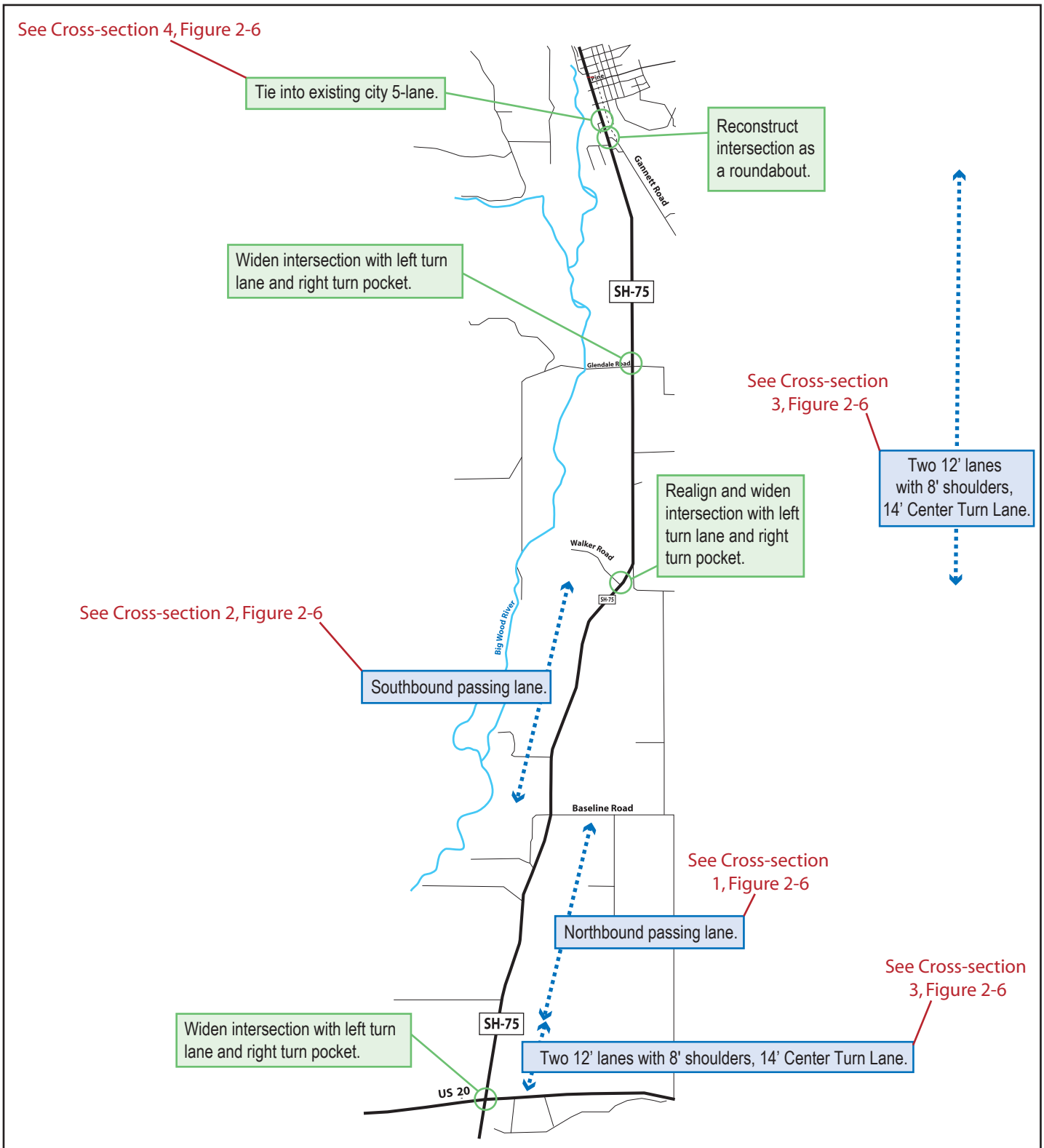
Figure 2-2 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Gannett Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck). A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM[9] traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service A/B.

This concept was presented to the City of Bellevue on May 15, 2006 and received a favorable response. It will be one component of a traffic calming plan for the City of Bellevue. Access to the business west of the roundabout will be provided via an additional direct access into the roundabout. Discussions with the land owner on May 22, 2006 were held to obtain input on the roundabout concept and possible access to his property. A favorable verbal response was received.

Relative to the Gannett Road/SH-75 realignment proposed in the DEIS, the Gannett Road roundabout will require the acquisition of an additional 0.28 acres of land from the owner on the west side of SH-75 and a 0.03 acre sliver of vacant land from a privately owned parcel in the southeast quadrant of the existing intersection. The land required on the west side of SH-75 is currently used for outdoor lumber storage and informal parking by the land owner. The additional 0.31 acres of proposed right-of-way was included in the wetlands, cultural resource, Threatened and Endangered species, and hazardous material surveys documented in Chapter 3 Affected Environment of the DEIS. These surveys were conducted for 150 feet each side of the existing SH-75 centerline. No natural or cultural resources or hazardous materials were found on this property.

As the Gannett Road roundabout will result in an acceptable Level of Service, is favored by the City of Bellevue and acceptable to the affected landowner west of SH-75, and does not have impacts on natural or cultural resources, it is incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.

[9] VISSIM is a behavior-based multi-purpose traffic simulation computer program that is used internationally to analyze complex traffic conditions on highways and urban roadway situations. It also enables simulation and visualization of traffic operations.



SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

Preferred Alternative
Proposed Improvements
Segment: US-20 to Gannett Road

Figure

2-5

Date: *February 2008*

Spruce Way Pedestrian Underpass

The conceptual design drawings contained in Volume II Conceptual Engineering Design of the DEIS (included in Appendix D DEIS) show the conceptual design of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2. Appendix D of this FEIS contains replacement figures for Figures II-64, II-70 and II-71. These illustrate the revised conceptual design at Spruce Way and the Ohio Gulch areas respectively.

2.3.3 No Build from River Street to Saddle Road

The Preferred Alternative does not include improvements from River Street to Saddle Road, the northern logical terminus for the project. The No Build through this section of the corridor was advanced into the EIS for the following reasons:

Public scoping and subsequent public involvement activities conducted during the preparation of the DEIS, as documented in Chapter 6 of the DEIS, indicated that any physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum, known as Main Street, would be unacceptable to local residents, businesses and the City of Ketchum. This concern was based on the value placed on the existing Main Street streetscape and its contribution to the visual quality and attractiveness of the resort community. Any potential widening of SH-75 will encroach into the existing sidewalks and storefront areas of Main Street, adversely affecting the existing visual quality of the Main Street, decreasing the sidewalk area, and thereby adversely impacting the pedestrian environment of downtown Ketchum.

During the development of the DEIS, the City of Ketchum undertook transportation planning, traffic studies, and parking studies that were expected to provide input to the SH-75 EIS process with respect to potential improvements and traffic operations changes north of Serenade Lane. However, the City of Ketchum did not make decisions or recommendations based on these studies with regard to potential physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum.

In comments received on the DEIS, the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley, for the first time in this EIS process, requested a build alternative between River Street and Saddle Road, including Main Street in downtown Ketchum. This included a request for changes to the grade at the intersection of Warm Springs and SH-75 in downtown Ketchum. On September 8, 2006, the City of Ketchum adopted the "Downtown Ketchum Master Plan" (January, 2006). This document does not call for any reconstruction of SH-75 nor for specific changes to the Warm Springs intersection. However, the document contains the following recommended step:

> *A three-lane configuration on Main should be considered as an alternative to the four-lane system to calm (slow) traffic and improve pedestrian comfort.*

To date, neither the City of Ketchum nor the City of Sun Valley have forwarded a potential build alternative to FHWA and ITD, so no such alternative or improvements to SH-75 north of River Street are included in the FEIS.

While the FEIS and the Preferred Alternative do not include a build alternative for River Street to Saddle Road, the Cities and ITD have committed to continued coordination of the planning for potential improvements to this section of SH-75. This commitment was made at a March 14, 2007 joint meeting with the City of Ketchum City Council, the City of Sun Valley City Council, and ITD. A subsequent letter was provided to ITD and is included in Appendix A of this FEIS. ITD has committed to assist the Cities in obtaining any funding and any additional environmental clearances that may be needed in the future. These activities will be conducted outside of the EIS process and are expected to occur over the next several years.

2.3.4 Phasing of the Preferred Alternative

Section 1.2 Project Programming and Funding of this FEIS describes the current programming and funding that is available for implementing the Preferred Alternative. The DEIS described a general construction phasing plan in Section 5.20.1 and as illustrated in Figure 5.20-1 (pages 5-148 and 5-150 of the DEIS, respectively). This conceptual phasing plan was developed to take into account geographic areas with the highest levels of congestion, and to provide a sequencing of construction that will have the least likely traffic disruption. Changes in the funding since publication of the DEIS have necessitated development of a revised phasing plan.

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum was one of several projects included in the Connecting Idaho program, instituted by the then Governor Dirk Kempthorne. Key to the implementation of the Connecting Idaho program was a new form of funding, Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE). As funding for the project was to be provided through the GARVEE project at the time of the DEIS publication,[10] the phasing plan presented in the DEIS was based on the continued availability of federal funds through the GARVEE program.

Since the publication of the DEIS, the SH-75 project was removed from the GARVEE funding initiative and specific funding was provided in SAFETEA-LU for $22.2 million. These two changes have necessitated the development of a revised conceptual phasing plan. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will be phased, primarily in accordance with available federal and state funding and public/private funding opportunities in the Wood River Corridor.

ITD has coordinated with Blaine County, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley to identify the highest priority components of SH-75 and develop a first phase plan for the currently available SAFETEA-LU funding allocation.

This first phase will occur during years 2009 through 2012:

- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for Timberway to Hospital Drive section;
- acquisition of right-of-way from Timberway to Hospital Drive; public/private contributions to ROW acquisition through expected development;
- construction of improvements from Timberway to Hospital Drive; and,
- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for the Hospital Drive to Elkhorn Road and McKercher Boulevard to Alturas Way sections.

Subsequent phases of construction will occur over many years, contingent upon expected federal funding at levels similar to those experienced since 1991, as described in Section 1.2 of this FEIS. Based upon current ITD and local jurisdiction discussions, the expected phasing is as follows:

- acquisition of right-of-way between McKercher Boulevard and Alturas Way.
- construction of improvements on Main Street in both the Cities of Bellevue and Hailey;
- construction of SH-75 between McKercher Boulevard to Greenhorn Bridge
- construction of SH-75 between Bellevue to Hailey
- acquisition of right-of-way between US-20 and Gannett Road.

[10] The GARVEE Transportation Program was approved by the Idaho Legislature in April 2005. GARVEE is a new funding program that allows Idaho to plan, design and build more highway projects in less time than through traditional transportation funding methods. It uses Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE) bonds to fund critical improvements in six transportation corridors throughout the state.

These phases are subject to change, in response to changes in federal funding and/or state or local priorities but represent the best available information at the time of publication of this FEIS.

Each of these phases will include the use of any ITD and/or local jurisdiction public/private partnerships including use of local funding, and developer contributions to right-of-way and construction that occur prior to or during these phases.

2.4 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road

In recognition of the comments received on the DEIS that support HOV operations, and the joint letter signed by the elected officials of Blaine County and five Blaine County cities (see pages B-15 to B-19 in Appendix B of this FEIS), FHWA and ITD acknowledge that Alternative 2 between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road could be converted to HOV operations. The traffic operations analysis conducted for Alternative 3 in this EIS indicates that the HOV operations will result in a lower Level of Service for vehicles in the general purpose lane, the majority of users in this section of SH-75.

Notwithstanding the traffic operations analysis in the DEIS, and as presented at public open houses, Work Group meetings, and at the public hearing, Blaine County, the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, Blaine County Citizens for Smart Growth, and many individuals provided comment on the DEIS that they expect that the HOV lane will attract more users that this EIS predicts. They believe the continued development of transit, carpooling, and changes to travel habits will support a much higher usage of the HOV lane.

This belief is partially supported by the growth in the provision of transit services in the Wood River Valley. This growth, the use of these services, and the new Mountain Rides Regional Transportation Authority, as described in Sections 1.3.2.1 and 1.3.2.2 of this FEIS indicate that there is a strong commitment to and implementation of transit services in the Wood River Valley.

Based on the position and desires of the local communities and organizations that submitted comments on the DEIS, ITD commits to the conversion of the operations of Alternative 2 to HOV operations from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road when ITD determines that the requirements discussed below have been met. Implementing Alternative 2 provides the necessary roadway cross-section to accommodate a change in traffic operations to HOV operations.

The decision of whether and when to convert to HOV operations will be made by ITD. The FHWA will not be involved in that decision and HOV operations are not part of the Preferred Alternative identified by the FHWA in this FEIS.

ITD's decision will be based on documentation that the following four requirements have been met. If a conversion to HOV operations is made, ITD will also have the final authority on the continuation or cessation of HOV operations, based on the evaluation process described in Requirement 4.

Requirement 1: A minimum segment of roadway, from at least Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road, has been reconstructed to the cross section and geometry as defined in Alternative 2. The success of HOV is partially dependent upon having a sufficiently long segment of roadway in place for drivers to experience a noticeable travel time savings. A typical

HOV performance measure in the United States is a travel time savings of at least 5 minutes overall in the project corridor.[11]

Requirement 2: A change in Idaho State legislation has been enacted to enable enforcement of the HOV lane restrictions. Idaho State legislation currently does not provide any regulatory ability for the Idaho State Police or Blaine County Sheriff's office to enforce an HOV lane.

Requirement 3: A plan for and the basis for funding of the enforcement of HOV, of education and marketing of the HOV operation, and of collection and analysis of performance data have been developed and agreed upon among the Idaho Transportation Department, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley.

Requirement 4: A formal process for evaluating the HOV operation, and for making a determination of whether to continue or discontinue its operation, is developed and agreed upon between ITD and Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, Sun Valley, Blaine County and Mountain Rides. The first review will occur no sooner than 6 months following commencement of HOV operation and no later than 12 months after commencement of operations. This provides time for SH-75 users to adjust to HOV operations over a 6-month period and commits to a specified timeframe for a formal review.

Criteria to be used in this review include measured travel time for users of the HOV lane and of the single occupancy lane (based on peak travel time studies); actual costs of enforcement and numbers of violations of the HOV lane restrictions (as provided by the Blaine County Sheriff's Office); HOV lane traffic volumes (based on traffic counts taken on at least three occasions during HOV operations); peak hour Level of Service for the HOV lane and the single occupancy vehicle lane; public response (based on phone calls, emails and correspondence received during the first 6 to 12-month period); crash analysis (based on accident reports); and impacts on trucking (based on comments received from the trucking industry).

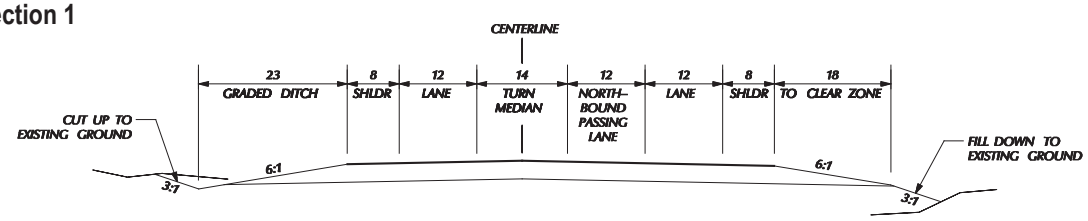
To facilitate this process and to develop the necessary documentation that ITD will require to approve a conversion, ITD commits to create a SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team composed of representatives from ITD, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley for the purpose of developing and implementing a program to meet the four requirements specified above. The members of the Operations Management Team will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to commit the resources to comply with the four requirements and to develop and provide documentation to ITD that the conditions have been met.

Formation of this Corridor Operations Management Team will occur once funding for construction of the final section of the SH-75 corridor between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road has been approved in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. ITD will be responsible for initiating formation of the Corridor Operations Management Team at that time.

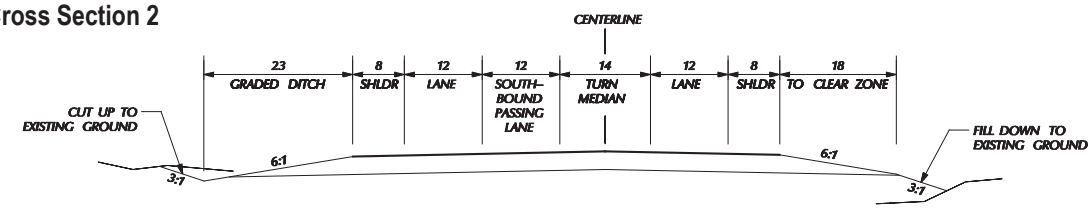
[11] American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), "Guide for High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities, 3rd Edition", 2004; and, National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 414 HOV Systems Manual, National Academy Press, 1998

Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: US-20 to Gannett Road

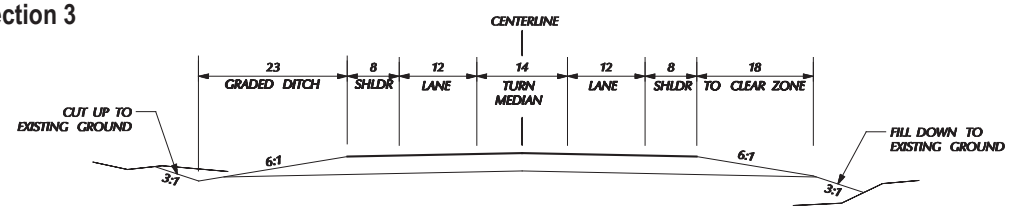
Cross Section 1



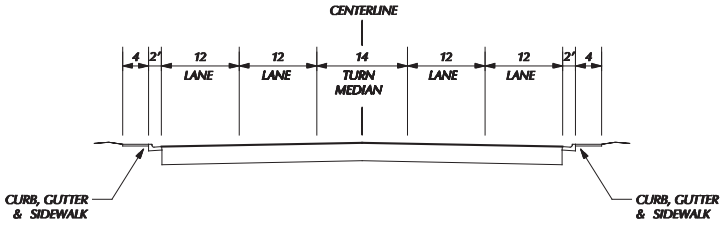
Cross Section 2



Cross Section 3



Cross Section 4



Note:
All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.

NOT TO SCALE

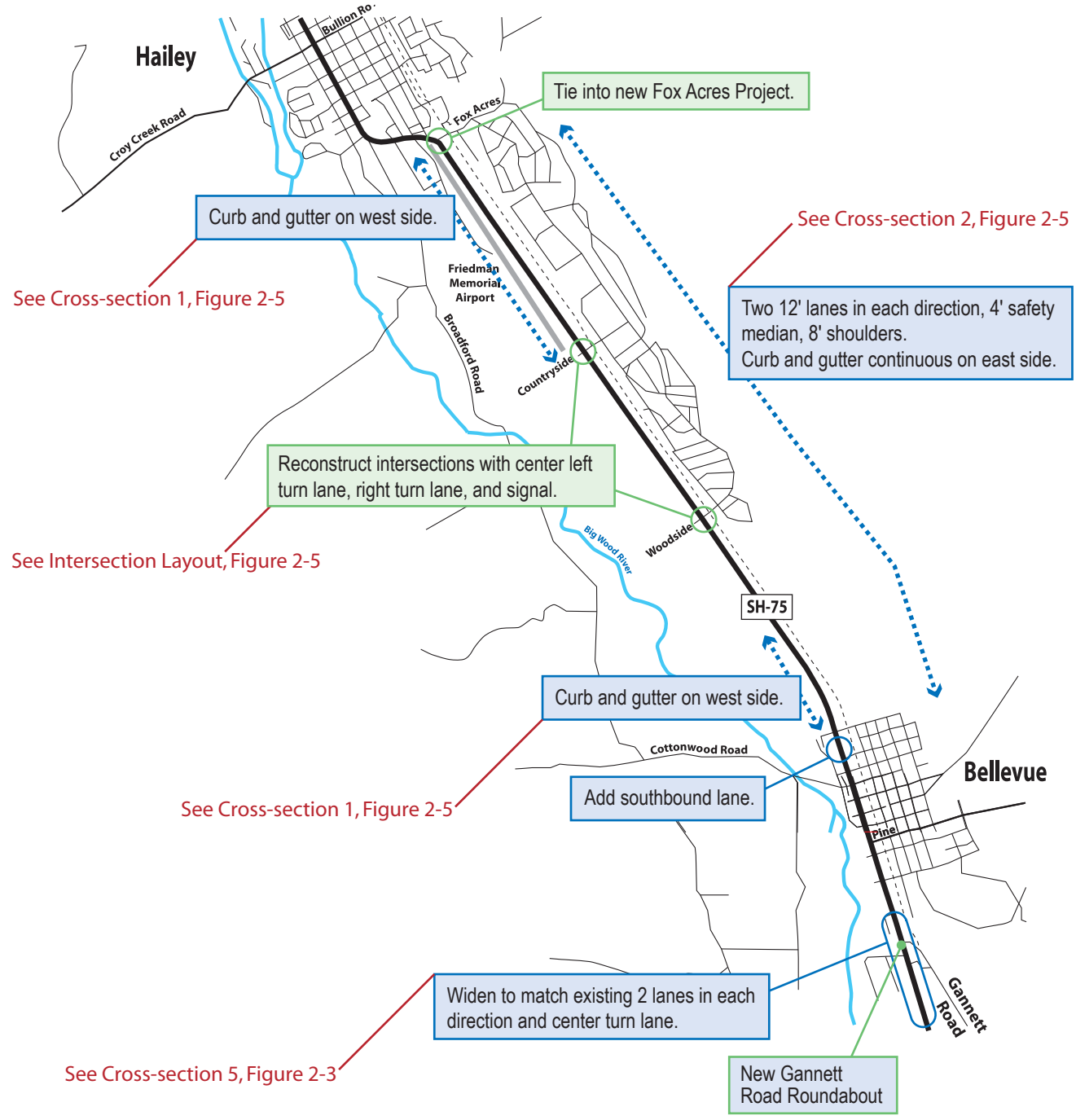
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections
US-20 to Gannett

Figure
2-6

Date: *February 2008*



SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

Preferred Alternative
Proposed Improvements
Segment: Gannett Road to Fox Acres

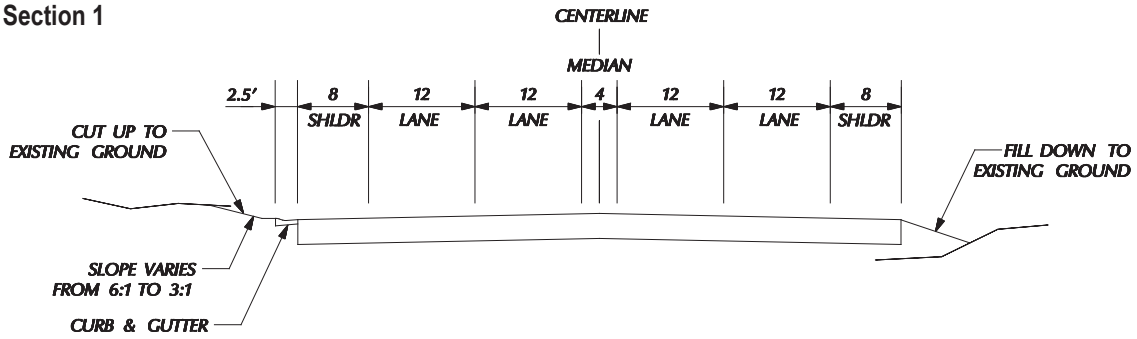
Figure

2-7

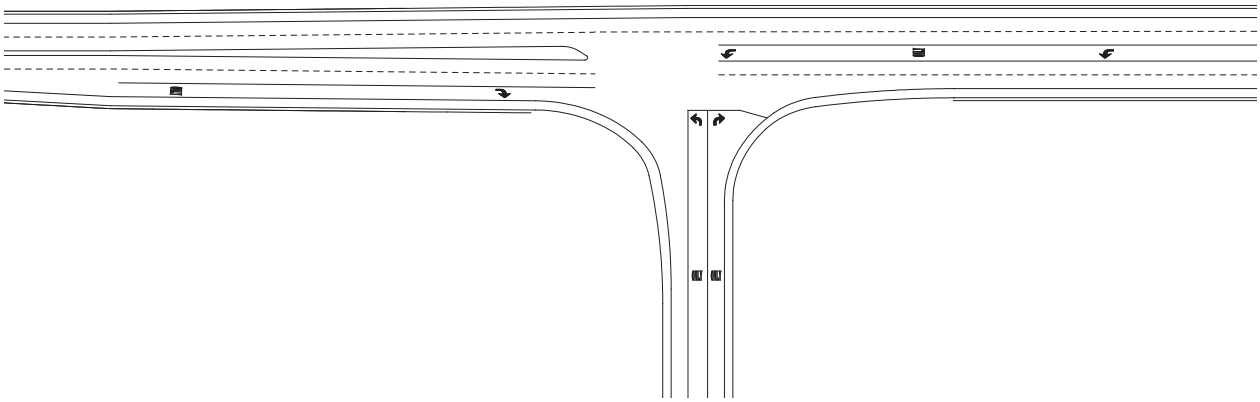
Date: *February 2008*

Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Gannett to Fox Acres

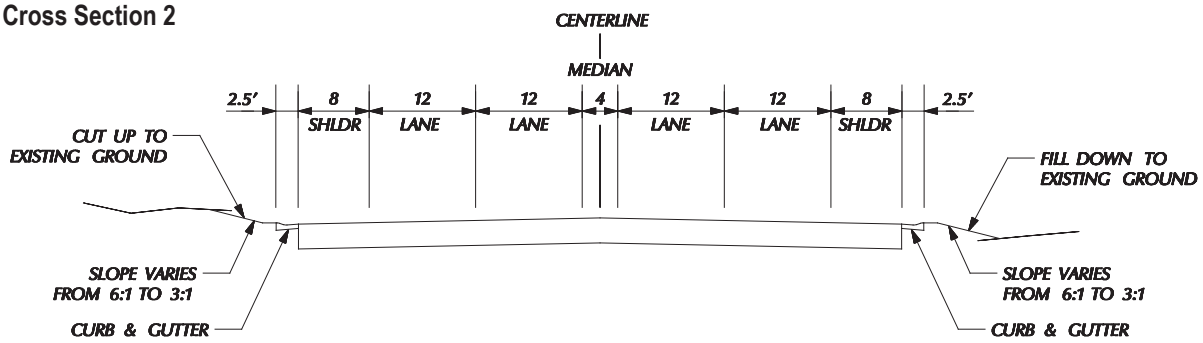
Cross Section 1



Intersection Layout



Cross Section 2



Note:
All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.

NOT TO SCALE

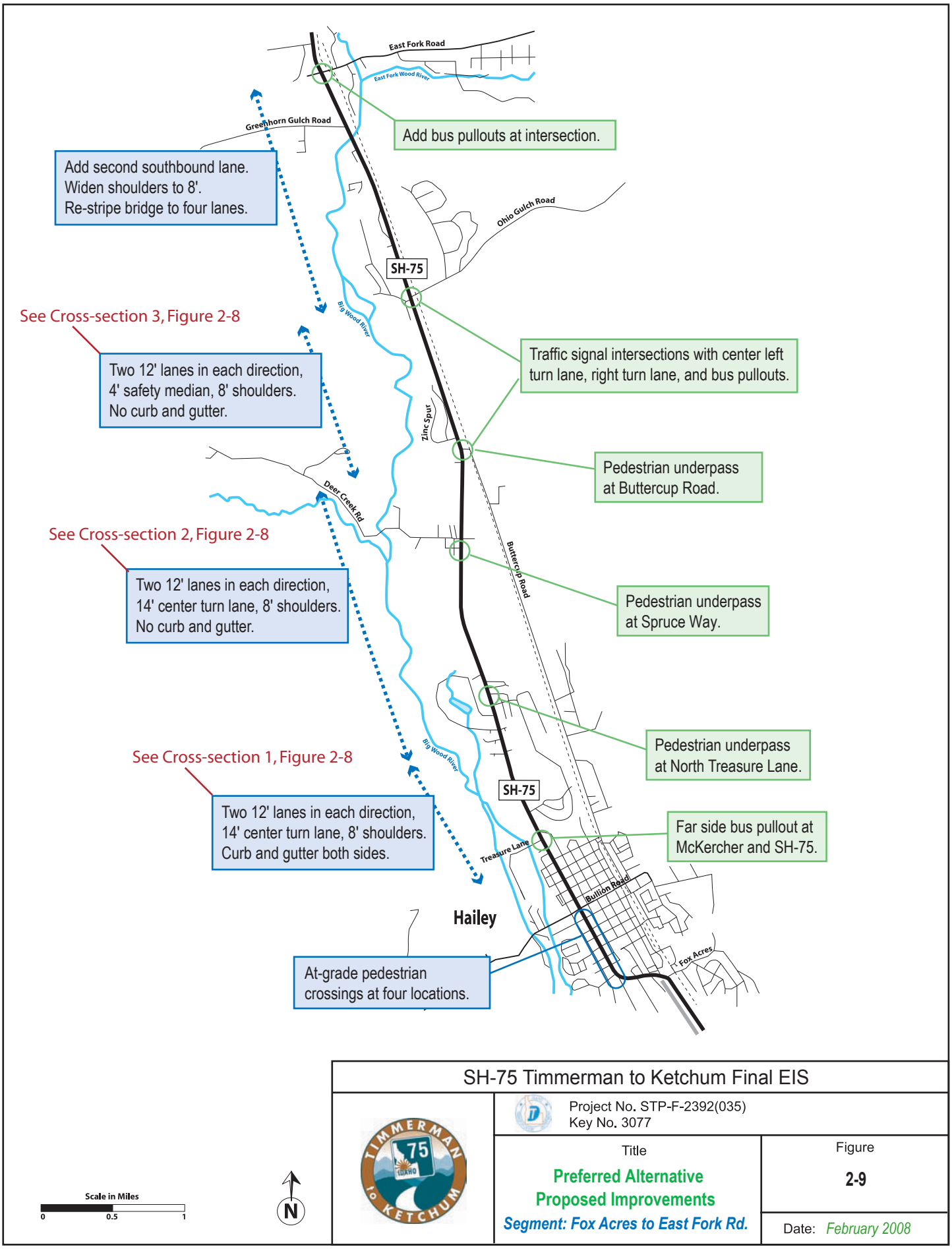
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections Gannett to Fox Acres

Figure
2-8

Date: *February 2008*



SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

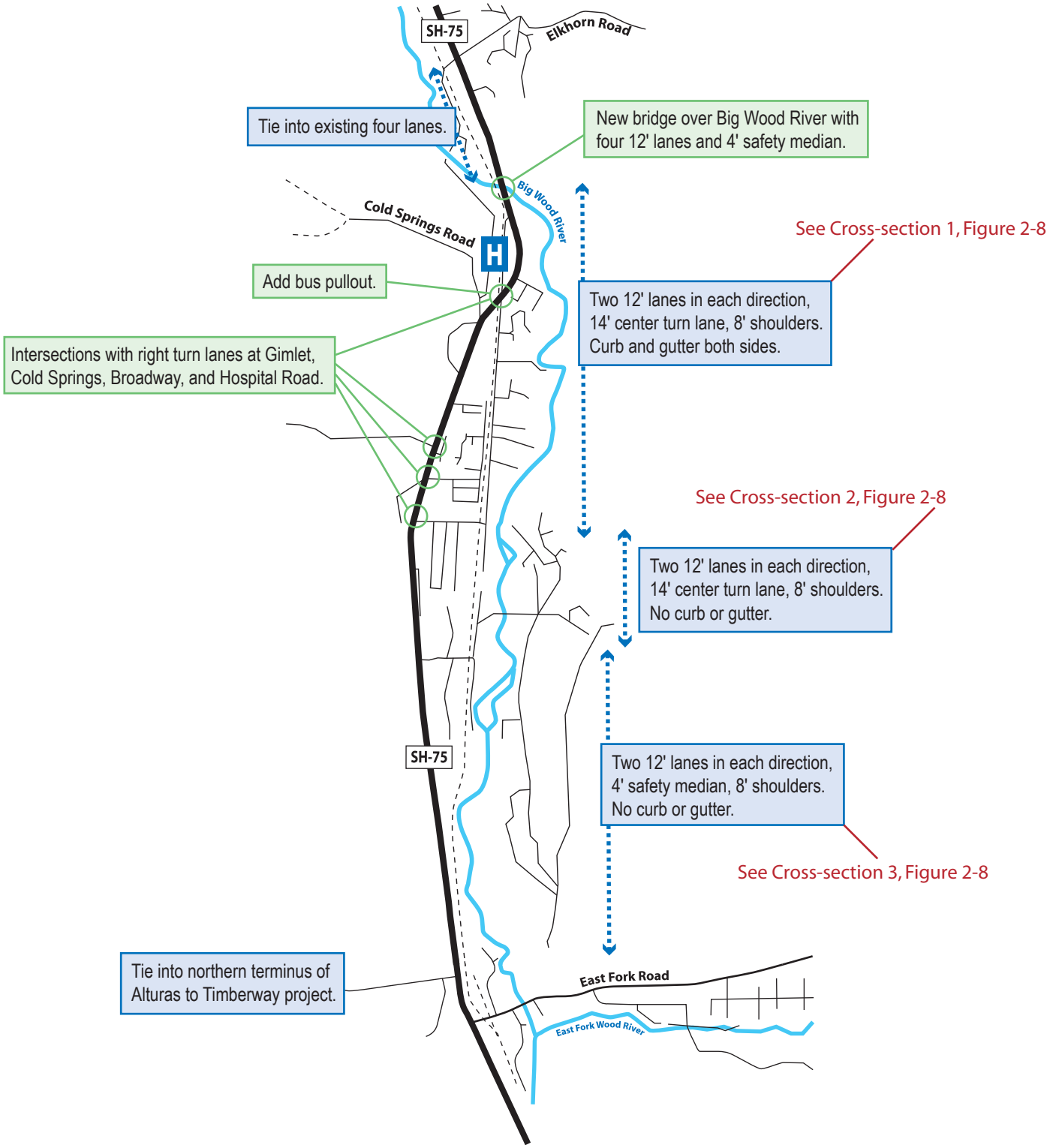
Title

Preferred Alternative
Proposed Improvements
Segment: Fox Acres to East Fork Rd.

Figure

2-9

Date: *February 2008*



SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

Preferred Alternative
Proposed Improvements
Segment: East Fork to Elkhorn Road

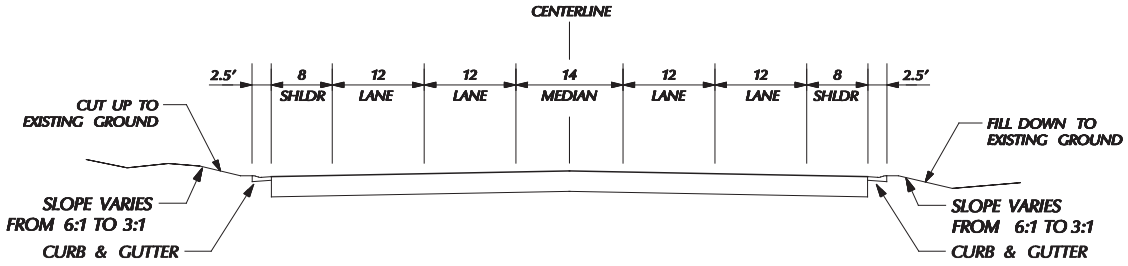
Figure

2-10

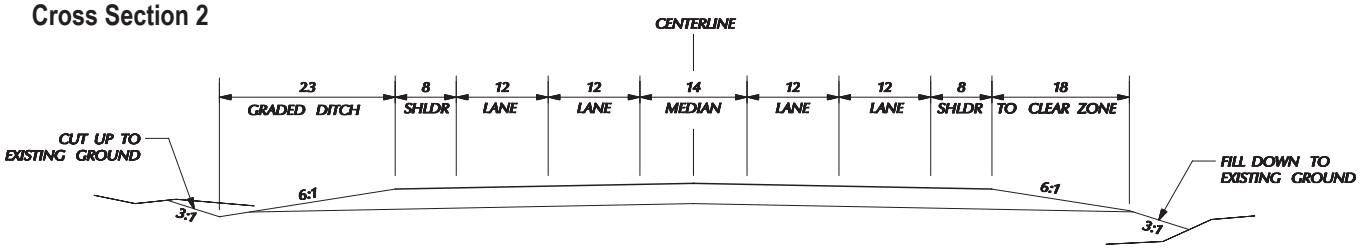
Date: *February 2008*

Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: McKercher Blvd to Elkhorn Road

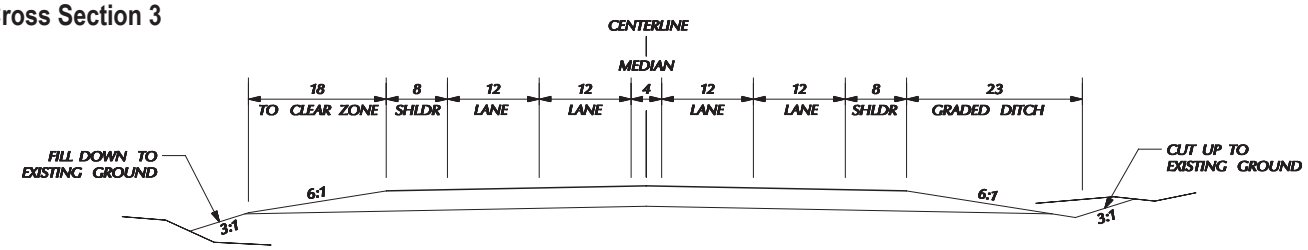
Cross Section 1



Cross Section 2



Cross Section 3



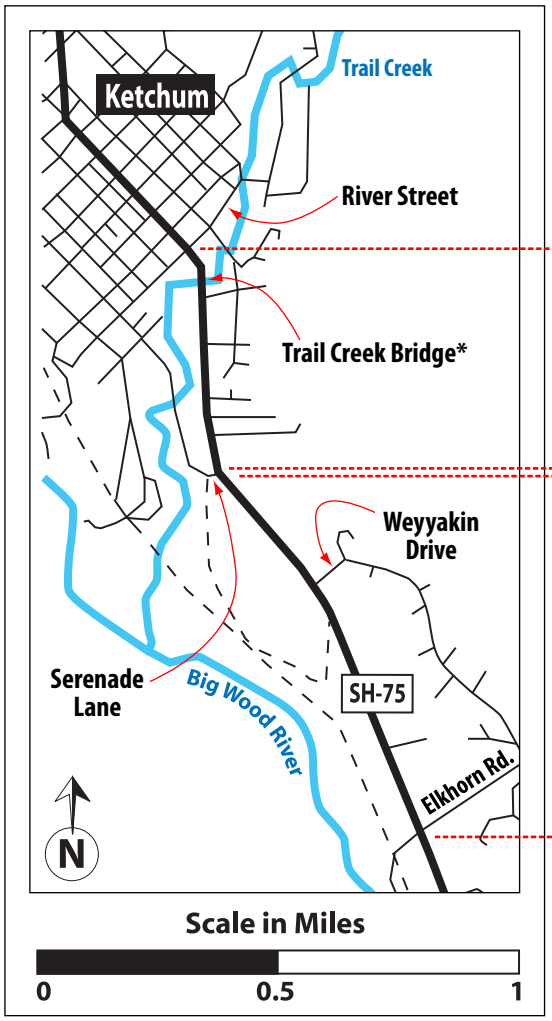
Note:
All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.

NOT TO SCALE

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS		
	Project No. STP-F-2392(035) Key No. 3077	
	Title **Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections McKercher to Elkhorn**	Figure **2-11**
		Date: *February 2008*

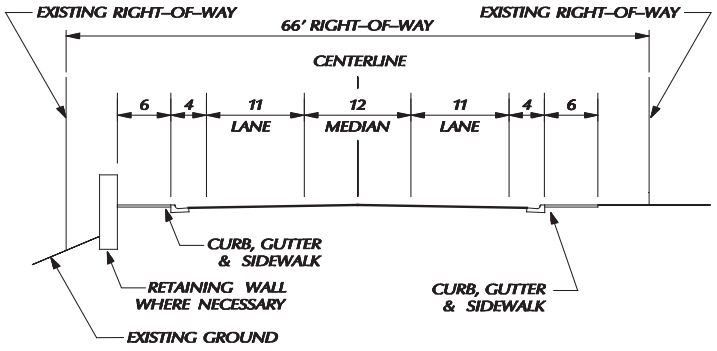
Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Elkhorn to River Street

Key Map:



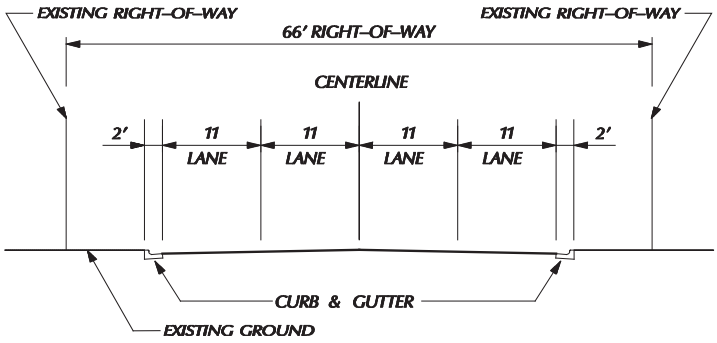
** 58-foot long Trail Creek Bridge reconstructed to accommodate 4 lanes but striped to 3 lanes.*

Cross Section 2 Serenade Lane to River Street



NOTE:
Number of through lanes transitions at intersection of Serenade Lane and SH-75.

Cross Section 1 Elkhorn to Serenade Lane



Note:
All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.

NOT TO SCALE

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Draft EIS		
	Project No. STP-F-2392(035) Key No. 3077	
	Title **Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections** ***Elkhorn to River Street***	Figure **2-12**
		Date: *February 2008*